The Pragmatic American Revisited:
A Direct Replication of Pickett and Baker (2014)*

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Abstract

In 2014, Pickett and Baker cast doubt on the scholarly consensus that Americans are pragmatic about criminal justice. Previous research suggested this pragmatism was evidenced by either null or positive relationships between seemingly opposite items (i.e., between dispositional and situational crime attributions and between punitiveness and rehabilitative policy support). Pickett and Baker (2014) argued that because these studies worded survey items in the same positive direction, respondents' susceptibility to acquiescence bias led to artificially inflated positive correlations. Using a simple split-ballot experiment, they manipulated the direction of survey items and demonstrated bidirectional survey items resulted in negative relationships between attributions and between support for punitive and rehabilitative policies. We replicated Pickett and Baker's (2014) methodology with a nationally representative sample of American respondents supplemented by a diverse student sample. Our results were generally consistent, and, in many cases, effect sizes were stronger than those observed in the original study. Americans appear much less pragmatic when survey items are bidirectional. Yet, we suggest the use of bidirectional over unidirectional survey items trades one set of problems for another. Instead, to reduce acquiescence bias and improve overall data quality, we encourage researchers to adopt item-specific questioning.

KEYWORDS

public opinion; replication; acquiescence bias; crime attributions; open data; open materials

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Introduction

Public opinion about crime, its causes, and suitable justice system responses, can influence government policies and legal decisions (Enns, 2016, 2014; Ramirez, 2013). These attitudes can also shape broader social and cultural trends (Garland, 2001; Simon, 2007). Accordingly, many researchers have turned their attention to the causes and compositions of these attitudes (e.g., Applegate et al., 1997; Grasmick & McGill, 1994; Thompson & Bobo, 2011; Unnever & Cullen, 2010).

For a time, there was a broad consensus that the American public was “pragmatic” in its attitudes toward offending and crime control (Unnever et al., 2010). Rather than being negatively correlated (i.e., a hydraulic relationship), survey data suggested Americans seemingly endorsed both environmental and individual explanations for criminal behavior, and both rehabilitative and punitive responses to wrongdoing (Pickett et al., 2014; Cullen et al., 2000). This “pragmatism thesis” suggested rehabilitation and punitiveness were not opposing sides of one construct (Unnever et al., 2010), but instead were best explained by their own distinct theoretical models (Pickett et al., 2013). From a policy standpoint, since Americans appeared to be open consumers of various crime policy solutions, they should be offered a balanced and nuanced array of options by government officials (Mascini & Houtman, 2006).

Given its bipartisan political implications, the pragmatism thesis was popular and persuasive. Pickett and Baker (2014) argued that it was also illusory. Rather than an empirical reality, they argued pragmatism was merely a methodological artifact — a combination of acquiescence bias (Saris et al., 2010; Krosnick, 1991; Krosnick, 1999) and the use of unidirectional question batteries (e.g., Mascini & Houtman, 2006; Unnever et al., 2010, cf.,

Ortet-Fabregat & Pérez, 1992). Using a simple split-ballot experiment, Pickett and Baker (2014) compared responses from participants who received unidirectional questions with those given bidirectional questions regarding attribution styles (i.e., environmental versus individual explanations for criminal behaviors) and support for rehabilitative and punitive crime policies. They found unidirectional sets of questions had three major effects. First, they inflated Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients. Second, they underestimated the magnitude of the hydraulic relationship between dispositional and situational attribution styles and between rehabilitative and punitive policy support. Finally, they underestimated how attribution styles, working in opposite directions, predicted both rehabilitative and punitive policy support.

Pickett and Baker's (2014) study has proven influential, casting doubt on unidirectional measurement of these constructs (Atkin-Plunk & Sloas, 2019; Burton et al., 2020) and contributing to a growing emphasis on the importance of rigorous measurement on crime and criminal justice topics (see, e.g., Cullen et al., 2019). Nevertheless, despite its theoretical and policy implications, the study has not been replicated. Thus, as part of the Center for Open Science's efforts under the SCORE project (SCORE Collaboration, 2021)¹, we conducted a direct replication of Pickett and Baker's (2014) experimental study.

The Importance of Replication in Criminological Research

Publication bias and the use of questionable research practices (QRPs) have contributed to replication crises in diverse fields such as psychology (Schmidt & Oh, 2016), biology (Fraser et al., 2018), and business (Latan et al., 2021). Researchers have called for more replications and open science practices (OSPs) to address concerns about the reliability of social science findings

¹ See also the SCORE website: <https://www.cos.io/score>

(Pridemore et al., 2018; Lösel, 2018; Simmons et al., 2011). Replication is key to discerning the truth and serves as a foundation for establishing scientific knowledge (Pridemore et al., 2018; Open Science Collaboration, 2012, 2015). Replication also provides some protection against false positives stemming from novel studies,² and is especially needed given many published research findings are likely false (Simmons et al., 2011; Ioannidis, 2005).

Despite the importance of replication (Nosek et al., 2012), it remains an infrequent and largely unappreciated exception in the published literature, especially in criminology (McNeeley & Warner, 2015). Of the 178 criminological replications identified by Pridemore and colleagues (2018), 74% were successful. However, replication efforts in other fields suggest that less than half of studies are successfully replicated, many with substantially smaller effect sizes than the original studies (Open Science Collaboration, 2015). The smaller effect sizes observed in these replication studies may be explained by larger sample sizes and OSPs, features largely absent in the original studies. Indeed, OSPs such as preregistration and open access to materials, data, and statistical code are increasingly common in the social sciences (Chin et al., 2021; Christensen et al., 2020).

Following recommendations from the Center for Open Science, and criminological (Burt, 2020; Pridemore et al., 2018) and psychological scholars (Nosek et al., 2018; Simmons et al.,

² Positive and novel findings are published and cited more often (Fanelli, 2010), and lead to inflated estimates of true effect sizes (Barnes et al., 2020; Gelman et al., 2020). The pressure to produce positive and novel findings likely contributes to QRPs and even outright fabrication of data or falsification of results (John et al., 2012; Sweeten, 2020). These “researcher degrees of freedom” occur during the design, analysis, and writeup process, typically going unreported in publication. P-hacking (Simmons et al., 2011; Simonsohn et al., 2014) hypothesizing after results are known (HARKing; Kerr, 1998), and other QRPs, inflate the chances of false positive findings (John et al., 2012; Simmons et al., 2011). Though the public finds their use to be immoral and even criminal (Pickett & Roche, 2018), such practices appear to be widespread in the social sciences (John et al., 2012; Simmons et al., 2011), including criminology (Chin et al., 2021).

2018), we implemented several OSPs in the current replication, including preregistration.³

Using a simple split-ballot experiment, Pickett and Baker (2014) assessed whether acquiescence bias could account for the “pragmatic American” phenomenon — past findings suggesting individual Americans simultaneously support both dispositional and situational attributions for crime, and embrace both punitive and rehabilitative policies. We replicated their analyses with a national-level sample of American respondents, supplemented by a diverse student sample (Murayama et al., 2014). We reproduce Pickett and Baker’s (2014; p. 201) hypotheses below:

Hypothesis 1: The use of unilaterally positive items to measure crime attributions and policy support will lead to an overestimation of the reliability of the resulting scales, compared to bidirectional scales.

Hypothesis 2: The use of unilaterally positive items to measure crime attributions and policy support will lead to an underestimation of the size of the hydraulic relation between dispositional and situational attribution styles, and between support for punitive and rehabilitative policies, compared to bidirectional scales.

Hypothesis 3: Once acquiescence bias is minimized via bidirectional scales, the effects of attribution styles on both punitiveness and support for rehabilitation will be similar, although in countervailing directions.⁴

Methods

Participants

Pickett and Baker (2014) used SurveyMonkey’s Audience online panel to recruit participants who were self-reported Americans aged 18 or older ($n = 826$). For our first replication, we recruited 1,320 American adults using an opt-in online survey conducted by Qualtrics. We employed quotas based on age, race, and gender to approximate a nationally

³ All materials, data, and code can be accessed here:

https://osf.io/ba26p/?view_only=1ed1fec12ad34e3e8727a739b3ecb122

⁴ Pickett and Baker (2014) also explored the mediating role of racial resentment, suggesting that when acquiescence bias is minimized (via bidirectional items), racial resentment mediates the relationship between attribution styles and policy support. To conserve space, we provide results for this analysis on OSF.

representative sample.⁵ Following Pickett and Baker, we used listwise deletion to address missing data, resulting in a final sample size of 1,280. We followed this with a second study using a diverse sample of 1,058 students from a large university in the American Southwest. Listwise deletion resulted in a final sample of 1,038. Table 1 provides demographic details.⁶

Design

The original study employed a simple experimental design that manipulated the wording of crime attribution and crime policy support survey items. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two sets of item wording. Half of participants received all positively worded items measuring crime attributions and policy support (unidirectional item wording) while remaining participants received both positively and negatively worded items (bidirectional item wording; for wording of all crime attribution and policy support items see Tables 2 and 3 in Pickett and Baker, 2014).

Measures

We retained all measures used by Pickett and Baker (2014). Reliability analyses were conducted for all scales. Table 2 provides the Cronbach alphas for the scales that varied in item wording and are discussed in the results under Hypothesis 1.

Crime Attributions

Five items measured *dispositional attributions* (e.g., “Most offenders commit crimes because they have evil or manipulative personalities and don’t care about hurting others.”) and

⁵ <https://www.qualtrics.com/research-services/online-sample/>

⁶ See Table 1 in Pickett and Baker (2014) for the original study’s sample demographic information.

six items measured *situational attributions* (e.g., “Most offenders commit crimes because our society offers them little opportunity to get a job and make money.”) using a six-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). Responses to unidirectional items were averaged to create scales for dispositional and situational attributions. For those assigned to bidirectional items, two dispositional and four situational attribution items were negatively worded. These items were then reverse coded and averaged with the remaining items to create scales for dispositional and situational attributions.

Crime Policy Support

Punitive support consisted of six items (e.g., “Making sentences more severe for all crimes.”), which respondents answered using a six-point Likert scale (1 = strongly oppose, 6 = strongly support). *Rehabilitative support* consisted of seven items (e.g., “Expanding job training programs for offenders in prison.”), which respondents answered using a six-point Likert scale (1 = strongly oppose, 6 = strongly support). Responses to unidirectional items were averaged to create scales for punitive and rehabilitative policy support. For those assigned to bidirectional item wording, three punitive and three rehabilitative items were negatively worded. These items were then reverse coded and averaged with the remaining items to create scales for punitive and rehabilitative policy support.⁷

Racial Resentment

Respondents answered five items derived from Henry and Sears’ (2002) Symbolic Racism 2000 scale using a six-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). Items were worded the same for all participants (e.g., “There is a lot of discrimination against Blacks

⁷ See Table 3 in Pickett and Baker (2014) for the wording of all crime policy support items.

in the U.S. today, limiting their chances to get ahead.”). Items were reverse coded as needed such that higher values indicated more racial resentment ($\alpha = .80$ for Qualtrics; $\alpha = .88$ for students).⁸

Control Variables

Following Pickett and Baker (2014), we measured several control variables: five items measuring *perceived risk* (1= not at all likely, 7 = very likely; $\alpha = .93$ for Qualtrics and $\alpha = .84$ for students); *perceived crime trend* (1 = decreased greatly, 5 = increased greatly); weekly *news consumption* (0 = no days watching news, 7 = every day of a typical week), *conservatism* (1 = very liberal, 5 = very conservative), *religiosity* (1 = very unimportant, 6 = very important), *prior family victimization* in the past five years (0 = no, 1 = yes), *education* (1 = less than high school, 5 = graduate degree)⁹, *gender* (female = 0, male = 1), *race* (other = 0, white = 1), and *age* in years.¹⁰

Data Analysis Plan

To test H1, we reported the Cronbach alphas of each scale. To test H2, we first conducted bivariate correlations to examine the relationship between attribution styles and between punitive and rehabilitative support for the unidirectional and bidirectional item wording groups. This was followed by OLS regression models with listwise deletion and robust standard errors that included all the control variables outlined above. We regressed situational

⁸ See Appendix A in Pickett and Baker (2014) for the wording of all racial resentment items.

⁹ This item was omitted for the student sample.

¹⁰ See Appendix A in Pickett and Baker (2014) for the wording of all control items.

attributions on dispositional attributions and controls (see Table 2)¹¹ and, separately, we regressed punitive support on rehabilitative support and controls (see Table 3).¹²

To test H3, we conducted additional OLS regression models with listwise deletion and robust standard errors. We regressed punitive support on attribution styles, racial resentment, and controls (see Table 4 for Qualtrics sample and Table 5 for student sample).¹³ Additionally, we regressed rehabilitative support on attribution styles, racial resentment, and controls (see Table 6 for Qualtrics sample and Table 7 for student sample).¹⁴

Results

Hypothesis 1

Supporting Hypothesis 1 and Pickett and Baker's (2014) findings, we consistently observed a reduction in Cronbach's alpha with bidirectional compared to unidirectional scales (see Table 2). Notably, the average interitem covariance for the bidirectional dispositional attributions scale was $-.009$, suggesting extremely poor internal scale consistency. We return to this point in the discussion.

Hypothesis 2

We first conducted bivariate correlations to examine the relationship between attribution styles and between policy support scales for participants who completed unidirectional and bidirectional survey items. For Qualtrics participants, there was a positive relationship between dispositional and situational attribution styles for the unidirectional

¹¹ See Table 4 in Pickett and Baker (2014) for comparison.

¹² See Table 5 in Pickett and Baker (2014) for comparison.

¹³ See Table 6 in Pickett and Baker (2014) for comparison.

¹⁴ See Table 7 in Pickett and Baker (2014) for comparison.

group, $r = .332, p < .001$. In contrast, this relationship was negative for the bidirectional group, $r = -.287, p < .001$. These correlations were significantly different, $z = 11.440, p < .001$. In addition, punitive and rehabilitative policy support were positively related for the unidirectional group, $r = .251, p < .001$, and negatively related for the bidirectional group, $r = -.145, p < .001$. These correlations were significantly different, $z = 7.195, p < .001$. Taken together, these results provide even stronger support for Hypothesis 2 than observed by Pickett and Baker (2014).

Among the student sample, dispositional and situational attribution styles were unrelated for the unidirectional group, $r = -.060, p = .171$, and negatively related for the bidirectional group, $r = -.185, p < .001$. These correlations were significantly different, $z = 2.041, p = .041$. These results are similar to Pickett and Baker (2014), and provide support for Hypothesis 2. However, counter to Hypothesis 2, there were negative relationships between punitive and rehabilitative policy support for both the unidirectional, $r = -.382, p < .001$, and bidirectional groups, $r = -.395, p < .001$. These correlations were not significantly different from one another, $z = .249, p = .803$.

Building on the bivariate correlational analysis and replicating Pickett and Baker's (2014) Table 4, we regressed situational attribution style on dispositional attribution style and all controls except for racial resentment (see Table 3). Among the Qualtrics sample (see left side of Table 3), we observed a positive relationship between attribution styles for the unidirectional group. For the bidirectional group, we observed a negative relationship between attribution styles. These regression coefficients were significantly different, $z = 7.871, p < .001$, replicating the bivariate support we observed for Hypothesis 2.

This analysis was again conducted for student participants (see right side of Table 3). As with Pickett and Baker (2014), the two attributional styles were unrelated in the unidirectional group. For the bidirectional group, however, we observed a negative relationship between attribution styles. These regression coefficients were significantly different, $z = 2.232$, $p = .013$, which also replicated the bivariate support we observed for Hypothesis 2.

Replicating Pickett and Baker's (2014) Table 5, we next regressed punitiveness on rehabilitative policy support and all controls except for racial resentment. For the Qualtrics sample, punitiveness and rehabilitative policy support were positively related for the unidirectional group and negatively related for the bidirectional group (see left side of Table 4). The regression coefficients for the unidirectional and bidirectional groups were significantly different, $z = 7.355$, $p < .001$, replicating the bivariate support for Hypothesis 2. However, in contrast to Hypothesis 2, the regression coefficients for the unidirectional and bidirectional groups were of similar strength and direction for the student sample, $z = -.396$, $p = .346$ (see right side of Table 4).

Hypothesis 3

Replicating Pickett and Baker's (2014) Table 6, we regressed punitiveness on attribution styles and all controls (see Table 5 for the Qualtrics sample and Table 6 for the student sample). In line with Pickett and Baker (2014), we did not observe a significant relationship between situational attributions and punitiveness for the unidirectional group. However, in contrast to Pickett and Baker (2014) and Hypothesis 3, this null effect also occurred for the bidirectional group. The regression coefficients for unidirectional and bidirectional groups (Models 1 and 3) were similarly weak, $z = 1.540$, $p = .062$. For the student sample, we observed a negative

relationship between situational attributions and punitiveness across all models. However, the regression coefficient for the bidirectional group was significantly larger than for the unidirectional group (comparing Models 1 and 3), $z = 2.035$, $p = .021$. This finding provides stronger support for Hypothesis 3 than Pickett and Baker (2014).

Replicating Pickett and Baker's (2014) Table 7, we regressed rehabilitative support on attribution styles and all controls (see Table 7 for the Qualtrics sample and Table 8 for the student sample). Beginning with the Qualtrics sample, we observed no relationship between dispositional attributions and rehabilitative support for the unidirectional group. For the bidirectional group, however, this relationship was negative and significantly larger, $z = 3.628$, $p < .001$ (comparing Models 1 and 3). This finding provides stronger support for Hypothesis 3 than Pickett and Baker (2014). In the student sample, we observed a negative relationship between dispositional attributions and punitiveness across all models (see Table 8). The regression coefficients for unidirectional and bidirectional groups (Models 1 and 3) were similarly weak, $z = 1.285$, $p = .099$ and consistent with the results of Pickett and Baker (2014). This finding does not support Hypothesis 3.

Discussion

Attention to replication research in criminology is growing (Savolainen & VanEseltine, 2018). In a recent issue of *The Criminologist*, the American Society of Criminology's Vice President noted, "science is under attack more than ever, and we need to get our side of the street clean so that our evidence-based recommendations are generated from soundly scrutinized scholarship that was rigorously reviewed and replicated" (Dugan, 2020, p. 1). Other prominent voices in the field have made similar appeals (e.g., Burt, 2020; Kulig et al., 2017;

Sweeten, 2020). With this in mind, we conducted a direct replication of Pickett and Baker (2014) following OSPs.

Pickett and Baker (2014) attributed past failures to find a negative relationship between dispositional and situational attributions and between punitive and rehabilitative policy support to acquiescence bias. The Pragmatic American, according to Pickett and Baker, was simply a methodological artifact of the way the survey items were worded. As evidence, they first reported that the alpha coefficients for scales representing these constructs were lower with the use of bidirectional survey items relative to unidirectional survey items. We observed a similar pattern for both samples, supporting Hypothesis 1.

Providing support for their second hypothesis, Pickett and Baker (2014) observed a stronger negative relationship between dispositional and situational attributions when bidirectional survey items were used. With one exception, we replicated both bivariate and multivariate results. Additionally, regression coefficients were statistically significantly larger in the bidirectional group for both samples, providing even stronger support for Hypothesis 2 than Pickett and Baker (2014). These results strongly suggest the nature and strength of these relationships depends on the way questions are framed. Americans appear much less pragmatic when survey items are bidirectional.

Pickett and Baker (2014) also hypothesized the effects of situational attributions on punitiveness would be positive for the unidirectional group and negative for the bidirectional group net of controls. Partially supporting their hypothesis, they observed no relationship between situational attributions and punitiveness for the unidirectional group, and a negative (though not statistically significantly different) relationship for the bidirectional group. For our

student sample, situational attributions were negatively related to punitiveness for both unidirectional and bidirectional groups, but this effect was statistically stronger for the bidirectional group. Partially supporting Hypothesis 3, this finding suggests acquiescence bias was artificially reducing the magnitude of the hydraulic relationship. However, our Qualtrics sample results suggest no difference in responses by question format. Situational attributions did not predict punitiveness regardless of whether participants answered unidirectional or bidirectional survey items.

As part of the third hypothesis, Pickett and Baker (2014) also hypothesized that the effects of dispositional attributions on rehabilitative policy support would be negative for the bidirectional group and positive for the unidirectional group net of controls. In contrast to this hypothesis, they observed similarly negative relationships for both question formats. Our student sample results replicated their findings. The negative relationship between dispositional attributions and rehabilitative policy support was the same for both unidirectional and bidirectional groups. However, for the Qualtrics sample, dispositional attributions and rehabilitative support were unrelated for the unidirectional group and negatively related for the bidirectional group. This relationship was much stronger for the bidirectional group, providing support for Hypothesis 3 beyond what the original authors found.

Conclusions

Overall, with one exception (i.e., the null relationship between situational attributions and punitiveness), the Qualtrics sample results were consistently stronger and more supportive of an acquiescence bias thesis than those observed in the student sample and Pickett and Baker (2014). Thus, our results compliment the original study's findings, and in several ways, are

stronger. At the same time, the student sample results are less supportive of the hypotheses than the Qualtrics sample results. Specifically, the relationship between punitive and rehabilitative policy support did not differ by question format, nor did the relationship between dispositional attributions and rehabilitative policy support, suggesting acquiescence was not at issue for these questions among the student sample. We can only speculate as to the reason for this pattern of results. Pickett and Baker (2014)'s study was conducted prior to the major political and social changes of the last seven years, and it may be that these changes are particularly felt among younger generations and people of color, both of which are strongly represented in the student sample. Still, this potential explanation is tentative and in need of further research.

Our findings suggest Pickett and Baker's (2014) study does indeed replicate. Their simple split-ballot experiment was an elegant demonstration of the problem of acquiescence bias in attitudinal scales in criminology and criminal justice. Nevertheless, though Pickett and Baker pose bidirectional scales as a potential solution to acquiescence, which some subsequent studies have done (e.g., Burton et al., 2020; Mancini & Pickett, 2017), we would caution researchers against their use. First, as Pickett and Baker themselves note, bidirectional scales do not eliminate acquiescent responses but instead, "merely moves them to the middle of scales, where they have less influence on findings" (2014, p. 215). Second, bidirectional scales require that some items be reversed, and these reverse-coded items often load on another factor entirely (Netemeyer et al., 2003), which is problematic for supposedly unidimensional scales. Consider, for instance, that in our Qualtrics sample, the average interitem covariance for the bidirectional dispositional attributions scale was -.009, indicating profoundly poor internal

scale consistency. Third, and relatedly, reversing items frequently involved adding negations to question wording, which can be easily missed or misinterpreted (Swain et al., 2008).

We encourage researchers to abandon the use of “agree-disagree” (AD) survey items whenever possible. Instead, we concur with Pickett and Baker’s (2014, p. 215) recommendation to consider “item-specific” (IS) questions, which feature tailored response options (see, e.g., Denver et al., 2018). Evidence suggests the use of IS questions results in less acquiescence bias (Saris et al., 2010), more conscientious responding (Höhne et al., 2018), and overall better data quality (for a review, see (Dykema et al., 2021).

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Both Samples

Variables	Qualtrics Sample				College Sample			
	Unidirectional Group		Bidirectional Group		Unidirectional Group		Bidirectional Group	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<i>Variables Measured Differently Across Groups</i>								
Punitiveness	3.84	1.17	3.72	.83	3.23	.82	3.34	.72
Rehabilitation	4.53	1.15	4.36	.91	5.15	.75	5.07	.71
Dispositional attributions	3.77	1.11	3.56	.63	3.28	.89	3.30	.64
Situational attributions	3.92	1.04	3.54	.65	4.31	.75	3.71	.68
<i>Variables Measured Identically Across Groups</i>								
Racial resentment	3.28	1.23	3.34	1.21	2.36	1.19	2.30	1.14
Perceived risk	3.34	1.71	3.25	1.65	2.67	1.22	2.64	1.23
Perceived crime trend	3.60	1.15	3.49	1.19	3.57	1.11	3.63	1.08
News consumption	3.40	2.66	3.43	2.54	1.15	1.61	1.08	1.54
Conservatism	2.90	1.18	2.92	1.20	2.65	.94	2.72	.95
Religiosity	3.95	1.81	4.01	1.82	3.95	1.55	3.91	1.63
Family victimization	.25	.43	.24	.43	.40	.49	.41	.49
Education	3.41	1.17	3.44	1.12	—	—	—	—
Female	.49	.50	.52	.50	.75	.43	.72	.45
White	.63	.48	.62	.49	.40	.49	.40	.49
Age	44.64	17.12	45.22	17.40	20.45	4.60	20.30	3.92
<i>N</i>	636		644		520		518	

ABBREVIATIONS: SD = standard deviation.

Table 2. Cronbach's Alphas for Scales by Sample and Experimental Group

Variables	Qualtrics Sample		College Sample	
	Unidirectional Group	Bidirectional Group	Unidirectional Group	Bidirectional Group
Punitiveness	.84	.49	.69	.57
Rehabilitation	.93	.75	.90	.79
Dispositional attributions	.84	.00 ¹⁵	.82	.39
Situational attributions	.84	.21	.76	.43
<i>N</i>	636	644	520	518

¹⁵ The average interitem covariance was -.009 suggesting extremely poor internal scale consistency.

Table 3. Multivariate Test of the Hydraulic Relation Hypothesis for Attribution Styles (DV = Situational Attribution Style)

Variables	Qualtrics Sample						College Sample					
	Unidirectional Group			Bidirectional Group			Unidirectional Group			Bidirectional Group		
	<i>b</i>	RSE	β	<i>b</i>	RSE	β	<i>b</i>	RSE	β	<i>b</i>	RSE	β
<i>Attribution Style</i>												
Disp. attributions	.211***	(.056)	.224	.223***	(.045)	-.217	-.004	(.050)	-.005	-.142*	(.055)	-.134
<i>Control Variables</i>												
Perceived risk	.078**	(.030)	.129	-.073***	(.015)	-.185	.035	(.031)	.058	.057*	(.025)	.104
Perceived crime trend	.123**	(.036)	.136	-.045*	(.020)	-.082	-.003	(.030)	-.005	-.051	(.026)	-.082
News consumption	.068***	(.015)	.173	-.003	(.010)	-.011	.007	(.021)	.015	-.042*	(.018)	-.096
Conservatism	-.082*	(.035)	-.092	-.031	(.020)	-.057	-.200***	(.043)	-.250	-.066	(.037)	-.093
Religiosity	.021	(.024)	.036	-.058***	(.014)	-.163	-.002	(.022)	-.003	-.053**	(.019)	-.126
Family victimization	-.048	(.092)	-.020	.135*	(.058)	.090	-.115	(.067)	-.075	.083	(.059)	.060
Education	.090*	(.036)	.101	.030	(.021)	.053	—	—	—	—	—	—
Female	-.024	(.079)	-.011	.128**	(.049)	.099	-.058	(.078)	-.033	.025	(.066)	.017
White	.087	(.092)	.040	-.042	(.053)	-.031	-.051	(.064)	-.033	.131*	(.065)	.095
Age	-.006*	(.003)	-.095	.008***	(.002)	.218	-.022	(.014)	-.133	.009	(.006)	.050
<i>R</i> ²		.220			.213			.091			.111	
<i>N</i>		636			644			520			518	

ABBREVIATIONS: *b* = unstandardized regression coefficient; Disp. = Dispositional; DV = dependent variable; RSE = robust standard error; β = standardized regression coefficient

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001 (two-tailed).

Table 4. Multivariate Test of the Hydraulic Relation Hypothesis for Policy Support (DV = Punitiveness)

Variables	Qualtrics Sample						College Sample					
	Unidirectional Group			Bidirectional Group			Unidirectional Group			Bidirectional Group		
	<i>b</i>	RSE	β	<i>b</i>	RSE	β	<i>b</i>	RSE	β	<i>b</i>	RSE	β
<i>Policy Support</i>												
Rehabilitation	.233***	(.052)	.229	-.173***	(.042)	-.190	-.340***	(.047)	-.313	-.318**	(.041)	-.313
<i>Control Variables</i>												
Perceived risk	.198***	(.029)	.289	-.006	(.022)	-.013	-.003	(.030)	-.004	-.005	(.024)	-.008
Perceived crime trend	.179***	(.042)	.176	.090**	(.028)	.129	.146***	(.032)	.198	.054	(.028)	.081
News consumption	-.044*	(.017)	-.099	-.016	(.014)	-.050	.008	(.021)	.015	.008	(.023)	.018
Conservatism	.194***	(.039)	.195	.162***	(.029)	.235	.163***	(.044)	.187	.237***	(.035)	.312
Religiosity	.031	(.027)	.047	.024	(.019)	.052	.027	(.023)	.051	.015	(.020)	.034
Family victimization	-.284**	(.100)	-.105	.107	(.071)	.056	-.057	(.067)	-.034	-.043	(.058)	-.029
Education	.021	(.037)	.020	-.045	(.028)	-.061	—	—	—	—	—	—
Female	-.186*	(.084)	-.079	.054	(.063)	.033	-.085	(.081)	-.045	.231**	(.073)	.143
White	-.012	(.099)	-.005	.015	(.072)	.009	-.022	(.069)	-.013	-.028	(.059)	-.019
Age	.001	(.003)	.018	.006**	(.002)	.141	-.009	(.008)	-.048	.005	(.007)	.028
R^2		.241			.164			.227			.260	
<i>N</i>		636			644			520			518	

ABBREVIATIONS: *b* = unstandardized regression coefficient; DV = dependent variable; RSE = robust standard error; β = standardized regression coefficient

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001 (two-tailed).

Table 5. Regression Models Predicting Punitiveness with Attribution Styles and Racial Resentment (Qualtrics Sample)

Variables	Unidirectional Group						Bidirectional Group					
	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	<i>b</i>	RSE	β	<i>b</i>	RSE	β	<i>b</i>	RSE	β	<i>b</i>	RSE	β
Racial Resentment	—	—	—	.163***	(.037)	.172	—	—	—	.220***	(.033)	.319
<i>Attribution Styles</i>												
Disp. Attributions	.578***	(.043)	.545	.524***	(.045)	.494	.342***	(.055)	.260	.234***	(.055)	.177
Sit. Attributions	-.007	(.044)	-.006	.078	(.047)	.071	-.093	(.062)	-.073	-.060	(.059)	-.047
<i>Control Variables</i>												
Perceived risk	.069**	(.026)	.101	.054*	(.026)	.079	-.004	(.021)	-.008	-.015	(.020)	-.031
Perceived crime trend	.156***	(.041)	.153	.156***	(.040)	.153	.053	(.027)	.075	.082**	(.026)	.117
News consumption	-.030*	(.014)	-.068	-.022	(.014)	-.049	-.023	(.013)	-.070	-.008	(.013)	-.024
Conservatism	.122**	(.036)	.122	.091*	(.036)	.091	.154***	(.028)	.223	.085**	(.027)	.124
Religiosity	-.023	(.023)	-.035	-.021	(.022)	-.032	-.001	(.019)	-.002	.002	(.018)	.004
Family victimization	-.231*	(.091)	-.086	-.222*	(.091)	-.082	.131	(.069)	.068	.126*	(.064)	.065
Education	.021	(.034)	.021	.040	(.034)	.040	-.041	(.028)	-.055	-.023	(.027)	-.031
Female	.058	(.076)	.025	.071	(.075)	.030	.099	(.062)	.059	.099	(.060)	.060
White	.061	(.094)	.025	.014	(.092)	.006	.044	(.070)	.026	-.029	(.068)	-.017
Age	.003	(.003)	.043	.001	(.003)	.021	.005*	(.002)	.104	.003	(.002)	.054
<i>R</i> ²		.422			.441			.209			.280	
<i>N</i>		636			636			644			644	

ABBREVIATIONS: *b* = unstandardized regression coefficient; Disp. = Dispositional; DV = dependent variable; RSE = robust standard error; Sit. = Situational;

β = standardized regression coefficient

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001 (two-tailed).

Table 6. Regression Models Predicting Punitiveness with Attribution Styles and Racial Resentment (College Sample)

Variables	Unidirectional Group						Bidirectional Group					
	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	<i>b</i>	RSE	β	<i>b</i>	RSE	β	<i>b</i>	RSE	β	<i>b</i>	RSE	β
Racial Resentment	—	—	—	.085*	(.038)	.125	—	—	—	.141***	(.032)	.222
<i>Attribution Styles</i>												
Disp. Attributions	.413***	(.037)	.449	.389***	(.040)	.423	.291***	(.043)	.258	.248***	(.044)	.220
Sit. Attributions	-.148**	(.047)	-.136	-.119*	(.050)	-.109	-.269***	(.045)	-.253	-.243***	(.044)	-.228
<i>Control Variables</i>												
Perceived risk	-.002	(.030)	-.002	-.004	(.030)	-.006	.010	(.024)	.016	.008	(.023)	.014
Perceived crime trend	.126***	(.031)	.171	.127***	(.030)	.173	.042	(.026)	.063	.063*	(.026)	.095
News consumption	-.009	(.020)	-.017	-.011	(.020)	-.023	-.006	(.021)	-.014	-.003	(.021)	-.005
Conservatism	.106**	(.040)	.122	.057	(.046)	.065	.229***	(.034)	.303	.148***	(.036)	.195
Religiosity	.005	(.020)	.010	.010	(.020)	.019	.003	(.018)	.007	.003	(.018)	.007
Family victimization	-.011	(.063)	-.006	-.010	(.062)	-.006	-.052	(.056)	-.035	-.047	(.055)	-.032
Female	-.036	(.073)	-.019	-.005	(.073)	-.003	.205**	(.069)	.127	.230**	(.067)	.143
White	.003	(.064)	.002	-.030	(.065)	-.018	.009	(.058)	.006	-.025	(.057)	-.017
Age	-.008	(.007)	-.044	-.010	(.006)	-.055	.007	(.007)	.043	.005	(.007)	.029
<i>R</i> ²		.329			.339			.309			.338	
<i>N</i>		520			520			518			518	

ABBREVIATIONS: *b* = unstandardized regression coefficient; Disp. = Dispositional; DV = dependent variable; RSE = robust standard error; Sit. = Situational;

β = standardized regression coefficient

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001 (two-tailed).

Table 7. Regression Models Predicting Support for Rehabilitation with Attribution Styles and Racial Resentment (Qualtrics Sample)

Variables	Unidirectional Group						Bidirectional Group					
	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	<i>b</i>	RSE	β	<i>b</i>	RSE	β	<i>b</i>	RSE	β	<i>b</i>	RSE	β
Racial Resentment	—	—	—	-.086*	(.043)	-.092	—	—	—	-.115**	(.035)	-.152
<i>Attribution Styles</i>												
Disp. Attributions	-.033	(.048)	-.032	-.005	(.051)	-.005	-.232***	(.061)	-.161	-.176**	(.063)	-.121
Sit. Attributions	.570***	(.054)	.516	.525***	(.059)	.475	.170**	(.058)	.121	.153**	(.058)	.108
<i>Control Variables</i>												
Perceived risk	-.107***	(.030)	-.159	-.100**	(.031)	-.148	-.125***	(.023)	-.226	-.119***	(.023)	-.215
Perceived crime trend	.112*	(.044)	.112	.112*	(.044)	.113	.120***	(.030)	.157	.105***	(.030)	.137
News consumption	.027	(.016)	.063	.023	(.016)	.053	.020	(.014)	.057	.012	(.014)	.035
Conservatism	-.017	(.039)	-.018	-.001	(.039)	-.001	-.113***	(.028)	-.150	-.078**	(.030)	-.102
Religiosity	-.016	(.025)	-.024	-.017	(.025)	-.026	.067***	(.019)	.133	.065***	(.019)	.130
Family victimization	.024	(.096)	.009	.019	(.095)	.007	-.070	(.076)	-.033	-.068	(.075)	-.032
Education	.031	(.038)	.031	.021	(.038)	.021	.034	(.029)	.041	.024	(.029)	.030
Female	.113	(.082)	.049	.106	(.081)	.046	.021	(.070)	.012	.021	(.069)	.011
White	.152	(.104)	.064	.176	(.105)	.074	-.056	(.076)	-.030	-.018	(.077)	-.009
Age	.010**	(.003)	.148	.011**	(.003)	.160	.012***	(.002)	.228	.013***	(.002)	.251
<i>R</i> ²		.316			.321			.236			.252	
<i>N</i>		636			636			644			644	

ABBREVIATIONS: *b* = unstandardized regression coefficient; Disp. = Dispositional; DV = dependent variable; RSE = robust standard error; Sit. = Situational;

β = standardized regression coefficient

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001 (two-tailed).

Table 8. Regression Models Predicting Support for Rehabilitation with Attribution Styles and Racial Resentment (College Sample)

Variables	Unidirectional Group						Bidirectional Group					
	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	<i>b</i>	RSE	β	<i>b</i>	RSE	β	<i>b</i>	RSE	β	<i>b</i>	RSE	β
Racial Resentment	—	—	—	-.121**	(.036)	-.193	—	—	—	-.222***	(.032)	-.357
<i>Attribution Styles</i>												
Disp. Attributions	-.231***	(.037)	-.273	-.198***	(.037)	-.233	-.154***	(.044)	-.139	-.086*	(.043)	-.078
Sit. Attributions	.378***	(.048)	.376	.337***	(.046)	.335	.255***	(.042)	.244	.213***	(.041)	.204
<i>Control Variables</i>												
Perceived risk	-.027	(.030)	-.044	-.023	(.030)	-.038	-.020	(.027)	-.035	-.018	(.025)	-.031
Perceived crime trend	-.022	(.028)	-.033	-.024	(.027)	-.036	.021	(.028)	.031	-.012	(.026)	-.019
News consumption	-.007	(.018)	-.016	-.004	(.017)	-.009	-.009	(.020)	-.019	-.015	(.019)	-.032
Conservatism	.071	(.038)	-.088	.001	(.043)	.001	-.160***	(.035)	-.214	-.031	(.038)	-.042
Religiosity	-.031	(.020)	-.064	-.038	(.020)	-.079	-.010	(.018)	-.023	-.010	(.017)	-.024
Family victimization	-.021	(.060)	-.013	-.021	(.059)	-.014	.114	(.061)	.079	.106	(.057)	.073
Female	-.092	(.073)	-.053	-.136	(.072)	-.078	.067	(.073)	.042	.027	(.069)	.017
White	.001	(.060)	.000	.048	(.061)	.031	.037	(.060)	.026	.091	(.057)	.063
Age	.001	(.011)	.006	.004	(.010)	.024	.002	(.008)	.012	.006	(.007)	.032
<i>R</i> ²		.284			.303			.191			.263	
<i>N</i>		520			520			518			518	

ABBREVIATIONS: *b* = unstandardized regression coefficient; Disp. = Dispositional; DV = dependent variable; RSE = robust standard error; Sit. = Situational;

β = standardized regression coefficient

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001 (two-tailed).